

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-5 and 12-17 are presently active in this application, Claims 6-11 are withdrawn from further consideration as directed to a non-elected invention, Claim 1 is canceled without prejudice, Claims 3-4, 14 and 15 are amended, and Claims 16-17 are added by the present amendment. No new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 3-4 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Sugawara et al. (U.S. Patent 5,536,995). However, Claims 2, 5, 12, 13 and 15 were indicated as allowed.

Firstly, Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowance for Claims 2, 5, 12, 13 and 15. In order to expedite prosecution of the present application, Claim 1 is canceled, Claims 3-4 are amended to directly or indirectly depend from allowed Claim 2, and Claim 14 is amended to depend from allowed Claim 5. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 3-4 and 14 patentably define over the applied prior art.

Further, it is noted that Claim 15 is also amended to depend from allowed Claim 12.

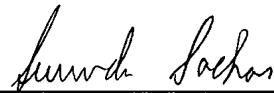
In addition, the subject matter recited in new Claims 16 and 17 corresponds to that of Claims 3 and 4, respectively, and Claims 16 and 17 depend directly or indirectly from allowed Claim 5. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that new Claims 16-17 do not raise new issues.

Thus, it is respectfully requested that the present amendment be entered under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116.

In view of the amendments and discussions presented above, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance, and an early action favorable to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,  
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



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Gregory J. Maier  
Attorney of Record  
Registration No. 25,599

Surinder Sachar  
Registration No. 34,423

Customer Number  
**22850**

Tel: (703) 413-3000  
Fax: (703) 413 -2220  
(OSMMN 06/04)

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